

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /057 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8964

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

DIA IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1733

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, UY

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL-MILITARY CONFRONTATION

REF: MVD 1732 AND PREVIOUS

1. GOU ANNOUNCED OVER WEEKEND THAT CR. JOSE ROCCA SIENRA, WHO HAD BEEN NAMED BY PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, WOULD CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL MEAT INSTITUTE (INAC), AND THAT PEILE, "AS PROPOSED BY THE COMMANDERS IN CHIEF", WOULD SERVE ON INAC'S BOARD. NO OTHER PUBLIC, OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE.

2. ALL CT SOURCES INDICATE THAT BORADBERRY ALSO OFFERED TO REINSTATE THE SAME REGULATIONS WHICH HAD CAUSED HIM TO FIRE PEILE. HOWEVER, SAME SOURCES UNANIMOUS IN REPORTING THAT MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE ADMINISTRATIO'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND THE POSITION OF MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE VEGH VILLEGAS WAS REAFFIRMED. POSTPONED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND RES-
UTION WERE CABINET CHANGES AND A PRESIDENTIAL CLARIFI-
CATION AS TO WHERE HE STANDS WITH RESPECT TO ELECTIONS
IN 1976.

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3. THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK MAY HAVE BEEN POSED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HAVE VIRTUALLY FORCED A TEMPORARY UNITY AMONG THE GENERALS. HOWEVER, DEEP DIVISIONS REMAIN AND THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS INDICATIONS THAT MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS WERE NOT AT ALL PLEASED WITH THEIR SUPERIORS' HANDLING OF THE MATTER, APPARENTLY BELIEVING THAT THE GENERALS HAD PUSHED THE PRESIDENT TOO HARD ON A RELATIVELY MINOR ISSUE.

DESPITE THE FACE-SAVER GRANTED THE PRESIDENT BY THE MILITARY'S CONFIRMATION OF ROCCA, BORDABERRY MADE CERTAIN CONCESSIONS DURING THIS FIRST ROUND. THE PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, PROBABLY REFLECTING BORDABERRY'S THINKING, TOLD THE ADCM ON THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 24 THAT THE PRESIDENCY AND URUGUAY'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE WERE TOO IMPORTANT TO SACRIFICE OVER SUCH A MINOR MATTER. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, "IF THE PRESIDENT GOES, HIS MINISTERS WILL GO, TOO, INCLUDING VEGH AND BLANCO".

5. THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS ENDED MAY 24 BUT WE HAVE ENTERED A NEW PHASE DURING WHICH THE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT ISSUES WILL HAVE TO BE RESOLVED, INCLUDING THE POLITICAL DIRECTION OF THE NATION IN 1976 AND BEYOND.
HAAHR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, ARMED FORCES, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY GOVERNMENT, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MONTEV01733
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750184-0314
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750518/aaaaapul.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MVD 1732
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL-MILITARY CONFRONTATION
TAGS: PINT, PINS, UY, INAC, (BORDABERRY AROCENA, JUAN MARIA), (ROCCA SIENRA, JOSE), (PEILE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006